

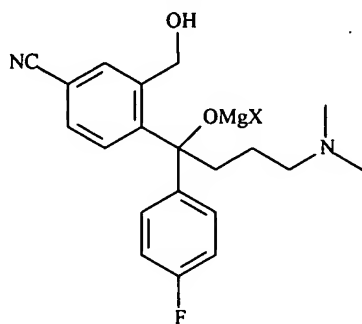
In the Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Original) A process for the preparation of citalopram characterized in that:  
(a) 5-cyanophthalide is treated with a mixture of 4-fluorophenyl magnesium halide and 3-dimethylaminopropyl magnesium halide and (b) the obtained mixture is treated with an organic acid, an inorganic acid, a phosphine, or with a labile ester forming group and a base.
2. (Original) A process according to claim 1, characterized by the use of from 1.8 to 2.0 moles of 4-fluorophenyl magnesium halide, for each mole of 5-cyanophthalide.
3. (Original) A process according to claim 1, characterized by the use of from 1.09 to 1.2 moles of 3-dimethylaminopropyl magnesium halide, for each mole of 5-cyanophthalide.
4. (Original) A process according to claim 1, characterized by the fact that from 1.7 to 1.6 moles of 4-fluorophenyl magnesium halide, are used for each mole of 3-dimethylaminopropyl magnesium halide.
5. (Original) A process according to claim 1, characterized by the fact that 4-fluorophenyl magnesium halide is a bromide.
6. (Original) A process according to claim 1, characterized by the fact that 3-dimethylaminopropyl magnesium halide is a chloride.
7. (Original) A process according to claim 1, characterized by the fact that said acid has a pK comprised from 0 to 3.

8. (Original) A process according to claim 1, characterized by the fact that said acid has a pK comprised from 2 to 3.
9. (Original) A process according to claim 7, characterized by the fact that said acid is orto-phosphoric acid.
10. (Original) A process according to claim 7, characterized by the fact that the acid is used in a concentration comprised from 55 to 95% by weight, preferably in concentration of about 85% by weight.
11. (Original) A process according to claim 1, characterized in that the phosphine is triphenylphosphine.
12. (Original) A process according claim 1, characterized in that the labile ester forming group is selected from the halide or the anhydride of an organic acid.
13. (Original) A process according to claim 12, characterized in that the halide of the organic acid is the halide of methanesulfonic, p-toluenesulfonic, trifluoroacetic or trifluoromethanesulfonic acid.
14. (Original) A process according to claim 13, characterized in that the halide is the chloride.
15. (Original) A process according to claim 12, characterized in that base is selected from triethylamine, dimethylaniline or pyridine.
16. (Original) A process according claim 1, characterized by the fact that the process is carried out in an organic polar aprotic solvent.

17. (Original) A process according to claim 16, characterized by the fact that the process is carried out in from 1.0 to 1.6 litres of solvent, for each mole of 5-cyanophthalide.
18. (Original) A process according to claim 16, characterized by the fact that the solvent is selected from tetrahydrofuran and/or toluene.
19. (Original) A process according to claim 1, characterized by the fact that the step (a) is carried out at  $-20 \pm 20^{\circ}\text{C}$ .
20. (Original) A process according to claim 1, characterized by the fact that the step (a) is carried out at  $-10 \pm 0^{\circ}\text{C}$ .
21. (Original) A process according to claim 1, characterized by the fact that the step (b) is carried out at  $-10 \pm 20^{\circ}\text{C}$ .
22. (Original) A process according to claim 1, characterized by the fact that the step (b) is carried out at  $0 \pm 10^{\circ}\text{C}$ .
23. (Original) A process according to claim 1, characterized by the fact of being carried out without isolating the intermediate products.
24. (Original) Compound of formula:



where X is an halogen, preferably chlorine or bromine.

~~22.25.~~ (Currently Amended)      Use of a compound according to claim 24 as an intermediate in the preparation of citalopram.